

## Pesticide Education Program Fact Sheet

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### Pesticide Labeling

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, as amended, requires that certain information accompany a pesticide. The information printed on or attached to a container is the label. Each time you purchase a pesticide, you also may receive additional instructions about how to use it. This printed information about the pesticide product from the company or its agent is called labeling. Labeling includes such things as the label on the product, brochures, flyers, and information distributed by the dealer. To the manufacturer the label is a license to sell. The state or federal government uses it as a way to control the distribution, storage, sale, use, and disposal of the product. The buyer or user sees the label as the primary source of information about how to use the product safely, correctly, and legally. The label is a source of information on proper treatment for poisoning cases to physicians.

Information on the label is the result of many years of extensive research and development that has cost several millions of dollars. This provision is made for the protection of humans, plants, animals, and the environment. Reading the label thoroughly before using any pesticide cannot be stressed too much. It is a prescription for use.

#### Parts of the Label

The label, by law, must include the following information:

1. Brand and chemical name of the product
2. Manufacturer's name and address
3. EPA registration and establishment number
4. Net contents
5. Ingredient statement
6. Kind of formulation
7. Registered uses
8. Hazard statements—toxicity categories
9. Directions for use
10. Storage and disposal precautions

#### Brand and Chemical Name

The brand or trade name identifies a product of a specific company. It appears on the label on the front panel in large, bold print, and it is the most identifiable name for the product.

The common name of the product is a name given to a complex chemical name. For instance, Tordon is the brand name of the herbicide picloram, which is the common name.

The chemical name is 4-amino-3,5,6-trichloropicolinic acid. A pesticide made by more than one company is sold under several brand names, but all of them have the same common name or chemical name.

### ***Manufacturer's Name and Address***

The law requires that the product's maker or distributor put the company's name and address on the label so you will know who made or sold the product.

### ***Registration and Establishment Number***

A registration number must be on every pesticide label. An EPA number shows that the product has been registered with the federal government. It usually is found on the front panel of the label and is written as "EPA Registration No. 0000." A number assigned to the establishment where the product is manufactured must also appear. In cases of special local needs, pesticide products may be approved by a state. These registrations are designated, for example, as EPA SLN No. WY-800004. In this case, SLN indicates "special local need," WY-800004 means the product is registered for use in Wyoming, was registered in 1980, and was the fourth special needs product registered in the state that year.

### ***Net Contents***

The net contents number tells you how much is in the container. If the product is liquid, it must be stated in liquid measure terms (gallons, quarts, pints, and fluid ounces). If the product is a powder or granule, it is stated in terms of weight (pounds and ounces).

### ***Ingredient Statement***

Every pesticide label must list what is in the product. The amount of each active ingredient is given as a percentage by weight and as

pounds per gallon of concentrate. It can be listed by either the chemical name or the common name. The inert ingredients need not be named, but the label must show what percent of the contents they make up.

### ***Kind of Formulations***

The basic chemical used to control pests must be formulated with other materials such as solvents, emulsifiers, surfactants, powders, granules, and dusts. The formulation is listed on the label as an emulsifiable concentrate, wettable powder, granules, fumigant, and so on. The same pesticide may be available in more than one formulation. Formulations, for example, may be designated on the label as 7E (7 pounds per gallon emulsifiable liquid), 50-WP (50 percent wettable powder) or 10-G (10 percent granular).

### ***Registered Uses***

The label must include what specific pests the pesticide controls, what crops or animals it can be used on, and the classification of uses. Every pesticide label must show whether the contents are for general use or restricted use. The pesticide's classification depends on its toxicity (hazard of poisoning), the way in which it is used, and its effect on the environment.

**General-use pesticides** may be applied by the general public without restriction, other than those specified on the label.

**Restricted-use pesticides** require controls in addition to label instructions because they may have unreasonable adverse effects on the environment or injure the applicator; even when applied in accordance with directions for use, warnings, and cautions; or when used in accordance with a widespread or commonly recognized practice. Labels for restricted-use prod-

ucts must state at the top of the front panel, “Restricted-use pesticide for retail sale to and application only by certified applicators or persons under their direct supervision.”

### **Hazard Statements**

All pesticide labels must have the statement, “Keep Out of the Reach of Children.” They are grouped according to their toxicity to people, animals, and the environment. You can determine the toxicity of a product by reading the signal word and looking at the symbol on the label.

Group	Signal word	Toxicity	Approximate amount to kill an average person
I	Danger-Poison	Highly toxic	Taste to teaspoon
II	Warning	Moderately toxic	Teaspoon to tablespoon
III	Caution	Slightly toxic	Ounce to one pint

Highly toxic materials have a skull and crossbones symbol plus the signal word “Danger” and the word “Poison.” Warning statements appear on the label if the product can poison humans and animals. The label also tells you of any special steps you should take to avoid poisoning, such as the kind of protective equipment needed.

Precautionary statements are on the label to protect the environment from pesticide contamination. For example, products toxic to bees will carry a warning statement on exposure from direct treatment or residue in crops. Warning statements also appear on the label to prevent people from contaminating water by cleaning their equipment, disposing of wastes, or applying pesticides where runoff is likely to occur. Statements also appear to remind the

pesticide user against harming birds, fish, and wildlife.

Highly toxic pesticides must have appropriate warning statements about symptoms of poisoning if the product is swallowed or inhaled. Information on antidotes and instructions to call a physician in an emergency will be included. A warning statement also must appear if the product can irritate the skin, nose, throat, or eyes.

### **Directions for Use**

Pesticide labels must include instructions on how to use the pesticide and must be adequate to protect the user and the public. The use instructions should indicate how to apply the product correctly, when the product can be applied, and at what rate it should be applied. If required for the product, the label should indicate the waiting period—the number of days between treatment and harvest—and re-entry, the amount of time that must pass before a person can safely enter a pesticide-treated area without protective clothing.

The label states that it is a violation of federal law to use a pesticide and must be adequate to protect the user and the public. The use instructions should indicate how to apply the product correctly, when the product can be applied, and at what rate it should be applied. If required for the product, the label should indicate the waiting period—the number of days between treatment and harvest—and re-entry, the amount of time that must pass before a person can safely enter a pesticide-treated area without protective clothing.

The label states that it is a violation of federal law to use a product in a manner inconsistent with its directions. It is illegal to apply a pesti-

cide to a crop or site not listed on the label. If applied to a pest not included on the label, the applicator is responsible for the results of that application. Some pesticide labels indicate use is limited to certain categories of commercial applicators.

Some directions for use that pesticide users must obey are contained in documents that are only referred to on the labeling. Such instructions include EPA or other government regulations or requirements concerning the safe use of the pesticide product. For example, EPA has adopted or is considering new requirements concerning: groundwater protection; endangered species protection; pesticide transportation, storage, and disposal; and worker protection. One sentence or paragraph may be the only notice you will receive that additional use directions are required in order for the product to be used in compliance with its labeling. You must determine whether you are affected, locate the applicable directions for use, determine how to comply with the instructions and requirements in the directions for use, and comply with those instructions and requirements. Most documents referred to on the label should be available at your local **county Cooperative Extension office**.

### ***Storage and Disposal Precautions***

Every pesticide should be stored and discarded correctly. The label has directions for storing the pesticide to prevent contamination of other products. Storage temperatures are stated on the label to prevent overheating or freezing.

The label either explains procedures for disposing empty containers or tells the user to follow procedures designated by state law. Directions on how to dispose of waste when rinsing equipment and containers also are included.

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## **Reading the Label**

**Before you buy a pesticide**, read the label to determine:

- whether it is the pesticide you need for the specific crop and pest
- whether the pesticide can be used safely under the application conditions

**Before you mix the pesticide**, read the label to determine:

- what protective equipment you should use
- what the pesticide can be mixed with (compatibility)
- how much pesticide to use
- the mixing procedure

**Before you apply the pesticide**, read the label to determine:

- what safety measures you should follow
- whether protective clothing and equipment are needed
- where the pesticide can be used (livestock, crops, structures, as examples)
- when to apply the pesticide (including the waiting period for crops and animals)
- how to apply the pesticide
- whether there are any restrictions for use of the pesticide

**Before you store or dispose of the pesticide or pesticide container**, read the label to determine:

- where and how to store the pesticide
- how to decontaminate and dispose of the pesticide container
- where to dispose of surplus pesticides

**If you have trouble reading or understanding the pesticide labeling, contact your local county Cooperative Extension Office or other knowledgeable person.**